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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

21 February 1951

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION NO. 27

FOR: National Estimates Board

SUBJECT: The British Position in Hong Kong

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The military situation on the Hong Kong-China border has remained unchanged since 1 February (see Memorandum of Information No. 16). The Chinese New Year (6 February) passed without incident and, although the Chinese have the capability of assaulting Hong Kong at any time, there have been no recent indications of impending military operations against the Colony. There have been recent reports of troop movements eastward through Canton to the Suatow area 200 miles northeast of Hong Kong, but \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ this indicates either Communist efforts to strengthen their defenses on the southeast coast or part of a build-up for a possible invasion of Taiwan, rather than a threat to Hong Kong.

British reactions to a Chinese Communist attack on Hong Kong would probably be influenced by the following factors:

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b. Hong Kong is becoming a liability to the British in view of continuing Chinese internal and external pressure on the Colony, Britain's other responsibilities, and the decline in the Colony's trade resulting in large measure from Western controls on exports to Communist China.

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c. British military forces in Hong Kong, \_\_\_\_\_ would be vastly outnumbered by attacking Chinese Communists and adequate British reinforcements are not immediately available.

In the event of a Chinese Communist attack on Hong Kong, it is believed that the British would recognize that a state of war existed between the UK and Communist China. Aside from the initial military action in connection with the defense of Hong Kong, however, British reprisals against Communist China probably would be confined to diplomatic and economic sanctions.

The British would probably be unable to provide more than a strong token resistance to an attack on Hong Kong, which, although imposing heavy casualties on the attackers, would probably not prevent Chinese Communist capture of Hong Kong within a matter of days. The British would then fall back on Malaya, a much more defensible as well as a strategically more important area.

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